

Abhinaya in Sattriya and Manipuri Dance: A Comparative Analysis

Dimple Saikia

Asst Professor, Department of Performing Arts
Mahapurusha Srimanta Sankaradeva Viswavidyalaya

Guwahati, Assam

Email: dimplesaikia89@gmail.com

Abstract

The term Abhinaya has proliferous meaning in the discipline of Performing Arts. This manuscript discusses the manifestation of abhinaya in the classical repertoire of Sattriya dance and Manipuri dance. How do both the classical dances of India belonging to the North East region differ in their characters? This paper mainly focuses on the sattvika abhinaya of both forms, where Bhakti rasa plays an important role. The author tries to bring out a comparison in both forms in respect of abhinaya in special reference to sattvika abhinaya.

Keywords: Sattriya dance, Manipuri dance, Sattvika abhinaya, Rasa, Bhava

Introduction:

Scholar Kapila Vatsyayan stated as “the principles which govern the angika abhinaya technique of drama (natya) also apply to the dance (nritya) where it is known as abhinaya” (Vatsyayan 2015, 16).

The word *abhinaya* is made up of two root words “*Abhi + ni*” to obtain ‘*Abhinaya*’.

Abhipurvastu nin dhaturabhimukhyarthanir naye /

Yasmat padarthan nayati tasanadabhinayah smrtah // (Shastri 1991, 159)

“The root ‘Nin’ with the preposition ‘abhi’ means ‘to come face to face’ or ‘ascertainment’, since objects are being carried towards this direction it is called abhinaya” (Unni 2014, 639).

Mandakanta Bose penned, “Abhinaya is an art that employs body movements to express meaning in natya while it lends beauty to nritta” (Bose 2007, 128). The performer performs and conveys the meaning of a given situation through bodily gestures, movements, postures and expressions.

Angika vacikascaivo hyaharyah sattvikastatha /

Jneyastvabhinayo viprascaturdha parikalpitah // (Shastri 1991, 160)

Bharatamuni in *Natyashastra* enumerated four types of *abhinaya* –

- *Angika* (the technique)

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

- *Vachika* (the dialogues, music, lyrics)
- *Aharya* (the costumes, make-up)
- *Sattvika* (sentiments and emotions represented by eight psycho-physical states)

Angika Abhinaya is conveyed by bodily actions. In other words, the gestural representations of a given situation are conveyed to the audience, it is termed *Angika abhinaya*. Bharata has classified the gestural representation into three kinds.

- *Sarira* (the body)
- *Mukhaja* (the face)
- *Cestakrita* (the gestures of the body)

This is in combination with *sakhas* (*hastas*), *angas* (major limbs), and *upangas* (minor limbs). Bharata sub-divided the *angas* (the major limbs) into the head, hands, hip, chest, sides and feet. The *upangas* (minor limbs) include the eyes, eyebrows, nose, lips, cheeks and chin. Sarangadeva, added another section of the body known as *pratyangas* which are six in number, the neck, the two arms, the back, the belly, the two thighs and the two shanks. Some scholars also include the wrists, the knees and the ornaments worn on the limbs (Sarangadeva 1976, 5-6). After discussing the *angika abhinaya*, he elaborately explained the *vachika abhinaya*. In dance *vachika abhinaya* is expressed through dialogues, songs, etc. *Vachika abhinaya* means the songs or the lyrics sung by the singer with expression while the performer interprets the meaning.

Aharya abhinaya includes the costumes and make-up of the performer which plays a pivotal role in the performance. Bharatamuni says four types of *aharya abhinaya* –

- *Pusta* (model)
- *Alankara* (ornaments)
- *Angaracana* (make-up)
- *Sanjiva* (entry of animals on stage like four-footed, two-footed and without foot)

The *Sattvika abhinaya* is the fourth division of the *abhinaya*. *Sattvika* means the internal emotions, that emerge from the human mind. These *sattvika* have eight physio-physical states. Bharata stated that the graces or embellishment of heroes and heroines in the dramaturgy depend on *bhavas* and *rasas*. *Bhava* is produced from the Sattva (instinct) of the human mind. *Bhava* is the manifestation of the internal emotions by the performer. The *Sattvika* is the internal feelings that is manifested through the *sattvika abhinaya*. *Natyashastra* describes the *Rasa* and *Bhava* in the 6th and 7th chapters respectively.

*na bhavahinosti raso na bhavo rasavarjitah /
parasparakrta siddhistayorabhinaye bhavet //* (Unni 2014, 565)

There is no *Rasa* without the *Bhava* and no *Bhava* without the *Rasa*. Both are mutually intertwined to bring out a final result.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

Tatravibhavaanubhava vyabhicarisamyogad rasanispattih (Unni 2014, 562)

Bharatamuni stated that *rasa* is the combination of *vibhava* (determinants), *anubhava* (consequents) and *Vyabhicari bhava* (transitory mood). He describes eight *rasas* and eight *sthayi bhavas*. Later commentators like Abhinavagupta, Dhananjaya, Sarangadeva, etc mentioned nine *rasas* adding ‘*Shanta*’ *rasa* to the list. They are –

Rasa	Bhava
<i>Sringar</i>	<i>Rati</i>
<i>Hasya</i>	<i>Hasa</i>
<i>Karuna</i>	<i>Shoka</i>
<i>Raudra</i>	<i>Krodha</i>
<i>Vira</i>	<i>Utsaha</i>
<i>Bhayanaka</i>	<i>Bhaya</i>
<i>Bibhatsa</i>	<i>Jugupsa</i>
<i>Adbhuta</i>	<i>Vismaya</i>

Dr. Sruti Bandopadhyay beautifully states, "There are stimuli or the *vibhava*, arousing a particular state of mind in the actor. The performance embodies a stable condition or the *sthayi bhava*. The aesthetic stimuli are called the *vibhava*. Bhava or the sensitivity of the mind is aroused by the *vibhava*. Two kinds of reactions follow, one, voluntary reactions called the *anubhavas*; two, involuntary reactions called the *sattvika bhavas*. The auxiliary sentiments are called the *vyabhicari bhavas*. The principle lays down the fact that when the *vibhava*, *anubhava* and *vyabhicari bhavas* are coordinated through the four kinds of acting or *abhinayas*- the audience gets ‘to taste’ or experience the joy of acting and thus *rasa* is evoked in the audience” (Bandopadhyay 2010, 226).

With the advent of *Vaishnavism*, another important *rasa* has been included in the list- *Bhakti rasa*. “The Vaishnava has considered all the *rasas* under one basic *rasa* i.e *bhakti rasa* or the *rasa* of devotion. Within this the other *rasas* exist” (Bandopadhyay 2010, 226). Thus, the five *rasa* or the *Pancharasa* mentioned below are under the *Bhakti rasa*.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

Bhava	Rasa
<i>Jnanabhakti</i>	<i>Shanta</i>
<i>Dasya</i>	<i>Dasya</i>
<i>Maitreya</i>	<i>Sakhya</i>
<i>Vatsalya</i>	<i>Vatsalya</i>
<i>Kanta</i>	<i>Madhura</i>

These five types of *bhakti rasas* are described in *Bhaktirasamrtasindhu*. In Chaitanya Vaishnavism texts, the *madhura rasa* has been given a distinct place.

The Neo-Vaishnavite movement initiated by Sankaradeva in Assam laid much emphasis on the nine types of *bhakti* known as *Navavidha Bhakti*. These nine types of *bhakti* have been mentioned in *Bhagavatapurana* which formed the base of the Neo-Vaishnavite movement in Assam. Sankaradeva in *Kirtan ghosa* described the nine types of *bhaktis* as-

Shravan Kirtan Smaran Vishnu
Archan Padasevan /
Dasya Sakhitwa Vandana Vishnuka
Kariba Dehaarpana // (Sri Sri Sankaradeva 2016, 80)

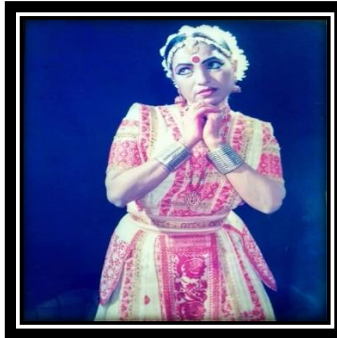
The nine types of *bhaktis* are –

1. *Shravan*
2. *Kirtan*
3. *Smaran*
4. *Padasevan*
5. *Archan*
6. *Vandan*
7. *Dasya*
8. *Sakhya*
9. *Atmanivedan*

The five types of *bhakti* as enunciated in *Bhaktirasamrtasindhu* by Sri Rupa Goswami are found in the literature or *padavalis* mainly defining the love of Radha and Krishna evoking the *madhura rasa*. All the five types of *bhakti*, are found in Manipuri dance which has its base in Chaitanya's Vaishnavism. On the other hand, Sattriya dance has all the four types of *bhakti rasas* described in Chaitanite Vaishnavism except the *madhura rasa*, as Sankaradeva doesn't give Radha as that important place as in Chaitanite Vaishnavism. He laid much

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

emphasis on the *Shravan* (listening to god's glories) and *Kirtan* (singing god's name) of Lord Krishna to achieve *moksha* or salvation.

Abhinaya in Sattriya Dance

Artist: Garima Hazarika

In the traditional Sattriya genre, the *Ankiya bhaona* exhibit the *rasa* and *bhava* elements. Regarding dance, it is still prevalent in the sattri circles as a medium of worship, where no *abhinaya* is represented and only *nritta* is prominent. On a parallel note, today sattriya is performing on the proscenium stage as a performing art form where it has a firm footing in the *abhinaya*. *Ankiya bhaona* is one of the oldest religious theatrical art forms of Assam where dance, music and drama are all equally significant. Sankaradeva and his disciple Madhavadeva composed various *naats*, the subject matter of which has been derived mainly from the *Bhagavatapurana*, *Vishnupurana*, *Brahmavairtanam*, *Harivamsa* by Sankaradeva and *Krsnakarnamruta* by Madhavadeva. “It is well known that Sankaradeva arranged a theatrical spectacle entitled *Cihna Yatra* in the early part of his missionary journey in his native village of Bardowa in present day Nagaon district, Assam. He used painted scenery to represent the seven heavens, *Sapta Vaikuntha*, and introduced new music with distinct melodic and rhythmic styles to evoke emotions. He is credited with having devised special musical instruments known as *khol* (drum) and *tal* (cymbals) for his performances. His biographers mention that he also introduced a set of preliminaries before the actual performance of the play, resembling the *Purvaranga* of *Natyashastra*. Sankaradeva improvised dances for various characters and also used masks for certain roles. *Cihna Yatra* drew large crowds and inspired him to journey further with theatre and all its related arts, which resulted in a completely new structure and form of theatre using a combination of music, dance and drama, called Ankiya Nat, and its performance called Ankiya Bhaona” (Bora 2013, 76-77). The *rasas* and *bhavas* are present in *ankiya naat* but all the *rasas* are subservient to *bhakti rasa*. Sankaradeva's *naats* end with the *bhakti rasa* where *shravan* and *kirtan* gain the most pivotal place. He urged every audience to chant god's name. The *rasas* in *ankiya naat* finally merge to *bhakti rasa* to avail salvation. In all his writings, *bhakti rasa* is perceivable. *Bhakti rasa* is a part of *shanta rasa* as *bhakti rasa* has the same *sthayi bhava* as *shanta rasa* i.e *Sama bhava*. Examples of various *rasas* found in Sankaradeva's writings:

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

In *Kirtan ghosa*, he establishes the chanting of the god's name (*shravan*) in the following ways.

1. *Namese Koribo Param Siddhi /*
Harir Naam Jagatare Nidhi // (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 14)
2. *Navabidha bhakti Vishnute asore*
Sehise Katha Uttama / (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 80)

From the above line *bhakti* is the only way to achieve salvation by getting rid of worldly worries and sin.

Sankaradeva composed various *naats* intending to propagate *bhakti*. Hence, every *naat* carries Krishna's glories to depict the victory of truth over evil through *bhakti*. In *ankiya naat* all *rasas* come under the *bhakti rasa*. Each and every *rasa* in *ankiya naat* finally merge into *bhakti rasa* as it is the only dominating *rasa* in *ankiya naat*.

- Sringara – In *Keligopala naat*, a song depicting *sringara rasa* as
Kesaba Karata keli gopini sangi
Range gobinda karata keli /
Kahaku heraya hari akhi bhang lo ram //
Kahaku cumbaye banamali lagi mukha /
Alingone gopik milai rati sukha //

The lord involved himself in dalliance with gopis with his mesmerizing smile. The lord kisses and embraces every gopi which gives them pleasure and joy.

- Hasya – A dialogue from *Parijata harana naat* portray the *hasya* as:
Narada : Hey Krishna, uhi parijataka gondho tini prahareka patha jai: Uhi parijata jahera grihe rahe, dhana jana bibhava saraye nahi. Uhi deva durlabha parijata je nari paridhan kare, se pushpaka mahimai parama saubhagini hoiyo: taheko bari cari swami kothaye jaye nahi. Aah: uhi kusumaka mohima ki kahabo.

Narada with all joy and smile explains the attributes of the parijata flower to Lord Krishna.

- Karuna – A song taken from *Keligopala naat* narrates the *karuna* as:
Kahe gayo Kahe gayo hamari bondhu madhava
Fukare niswah jhurai nira nayane bayana haate carai

When Krishna goes away from among the gopis, they started crying and tears slipped from their weeping eyes. They sang in *karuna bhava* by addressing lord Krishna as oh our dear friend Madhai, where you have gone.

- Raudra – A dialogue of Saci to Narada clearly defines the *Raudra* as
Saci : Aah: abhagya kapala, Indrani Sacika parijata kathaka manusi

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

*Satyabhama pindhite sada gelo: he rishiraja, bologiya jao
Aneke Punya kaya kaho Amravatika adhikarini haya, tewe parijata
paridhan karate payo: hamaro parijata Indra dite paroye nahi*

In the above narration, Saci raged and asked Narada to go and tell Satyabhama that she will not give her the parijata tree. Further, Saci added, being a human, how dare Satyabhama wished to have the parijata of divinity.

- Vira – A statement of Indra from *Parijata harana naat* shows clearly the
Vira

Indra: *Aye Jadava, sacika parijata Kaise niya jao, uhi tikhnatoro
sore tuhari prana curawobo, hamaku aagu kaha jaobo.*

Indra in a heroic and daring tone said to Krishna, how can you (Krishna and Satyabhama) take away Saci's parijata? Now you can't run away from me. I will kill you by the sharp arrow of mine.

- Bibhatsa – In *Rukmini harana naat*, Rukmini delivers a dialogue

producing *bibhatsa rasa* as

Rukmini : *Oye papi sishupala, tuhu hamaka bibaha korite aolo. Ha ha*

jaise singhoko bharjyaka srigala abhilasha koyo thika. Ha ha

Krishna bine hamu prana rakhobo. Taba hamara jivana dhika

dhika. He prana swami Sri Krishna, tuhu esabo britanto nahi

janoho. Tuhako samipo kaheko pothayu.

O sinful Sishupala, you are here to marry me. Being a jackal yourself, you are trying to provoke the wife of a lion. Oh, my lord Krishna you don't know about all these. I will tell you by sending someone near you.

- Adbhuta – Conversation of king Dasaratha and sage Viswamitra in *Ramavijaya naat* shows the *adbhuta rasa*.

Dasaratha – *Aahe muniraja, hamara putra Rama Lakshmana se balak taheka
rakshasaka dite sao, uhi kuno byabahara, ha ha rishiraja, yajna
Raksha nimitta hamaka niya jao.*

Dasaratha's conversation with sage Viswamitra shows the *adbhuta rasa* when the later asked his two sons Rama and Lakshmana for the purpose to kill the two demons Maricha and Subahu. To this, the king replied and requested to take him instead of his two sons as both are still a child and couldn't be able to kill the demons.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

- Shanta rasa – The following dialogue of Parshurama in *Ramavijaya naat* shows *Shanta rasa* and within this, the *bhakti bhava* is discernible.

Parshurama – *He prabhu Sri Ram, tuhu parama ishwara, hamu
tuhari angkho, iha najani darpa koyolu, hamara duho
moroho guhai.*

Here, Parshurama bow down and asked forgiveness for not realizing the absolute being, Sri Rama.

The *sutradhara* in the *naats* deliver dialogues that depict the *shravan* and *kirtan* as the highest mode of devotion. He keeps on saying repeatedly.

Ta dekhaho sunaha nirantare haribolo hari

Hence, he urges the audience to look and listen carefully and to keep on chanting Lord Hari's name. Sankaradeva emphasized *bhakti rasa* with the utterance of the sloka by *sutradhara* at the beginning of every play to exhibit the sturdy hold of *bhakti* in the *naat*.

*Bho bho sabhasadah juyang srinudhwam shradhayadhuna /
Rukmini haranang naam natakam mukti sadhakam //*
- Sloka of *Rukmini harana naat*

*Bho bho sabhasadah juyang rinuta sabadhanatah /
Keligopala namedam natakam mukti sadhakam //*
- Sloka of *Keligopala naat*

Through the above slokas the *sutradhara* announces and requested everyone present in the audience to listen to the *naat* carefully as it has the capability of liberating the soul. A beautiful exemplification of *bhakti* is in the verses of *Kirtan ghosa*.

Hari Ram Hari Ram a mul mantra

Kolita nahi Tapa yajna mantra (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 70)

In *Kaliyuga* nothing can avail salvation except chanting lord's name.

Krishna katha shravanat suddha hoibo mon /

Sarbodoi koribaha Krishnara Kirtana // (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 89)

The soul becomes pious only by listening to the glories of God and one should chant Krishna's name eternally.

In *Keligopala naat*, the gopis who couldn't go out of their homes to meet Krishna due to the restrictions from their husband or any other reasons, they started recalling him stealthily and surrendering themselves onto his feet. The following sloka illustrates the meaning.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

*Ja gopyang parsvamaprapta nirudhdhah patidevaroi /
Hridi govinda saranang bisintya bijahu tanuh //*

In *Parijata harana naat*, in a conversation between Satyabhama and Rukmini, the later illustrated *bhakti* glorification of Krishna in the following way-

Rukmini – *Aye Satyabhama, ki kohoiso, Jagataka parama guru Sri
Krishna Unikara Saran sewa karate brahmada bhitore kuna
durlava thika: Dharma, Artha, Kama, moksha cari padartha
haate milaya tuhari parijata kuno kotha*

Here Rukmini explains the worth of *bhakti* to Satyabhama by saying that their husband is the supreme being in the universe and by simply praying to him they get everything – *dharma*(faith), *artha* (wealth), *kama* (love) and *moksha*(liberation), so what is the worth of the *parijata*.

Further Sankaradeva's disciple Madhavadeva too composed various works on *bhakti*. *Namghosa*, the monumental work, emphasized the various modes of *bhakti*.

Hari bol Hari bol kori mono thir /

Tewehe safal huye manushya sarir // (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 82)

With adherence to great devotion, one should keep chanting Hari's name, thus purifying the human body to attain deliverance.

Madhavadeva's *dasya bhakti* can be seen in the following verse:

*Nuhu jana ami cari jati cari ashrami nuhu aati
Nuhu dharmasil danbrata tirthagami /
Kintu purananda samudrar Gopibharta pada kamalar /
Dasara dasa tana dasa bhorilu ami //* (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 117)

I do not belong to the four castes nor do I belong to the four ashramas. I am neither a pious, a donor, or a pilgrim. But to the Lord who is the ocean of joy and happiness, I become the servant of his lotus feet.

Atmanivedan, one of the types of *navavidha bhakti* is illustrated in *Namghosa* by Madhavadeva as follows:

He Krishna taju pawe pahilu sarana /

Mayi anathoro natha tumi Narayana // (Sri Sri Sankardeva 2016, 81)

Oh lord Krishna being an orphan you are my preserver and I bow down and self-surrender myself onto your feet to take refuge.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

The eight *Nayikas* as mentioned in *Natyashastra* of Bharatamuni according to their mental set up about the situation with their Hero are apparent in the *Ankiya naats*.

- *Vasakasajjika nayika* is reflected in the following sloka of *Rukmini harana naat* as:

Krishnasya rupalabanya sravanen bimohita /

Dadhau tatsaranambhojang bhajanayang satang sati /

After hearing the handsomeness qualities of Krishna, Rukmini gets fascinated and passionate about thinking about lord Krishna's thoughts in her heart.

Sruttya sakhimukhat sakhyadartamandita sati /

Rukmini kriyaramas sprista haripadang hridi //

Hearing the good news (consent to the marriage of Rukmini and Krishna) from her dear friend she becomes very happy and started playing with her friends, keeping Lord's image in her heart.

- *Swadinbhartrika nayika* is reveal in Rukmini's dialogue of *Parijat haran naat* as:

*Aye Satyabhama, ki kohoiso, Jagataka param guru Sri Krishna Unikara sarana
sewa korite brahmada bhitoro kino durlov thika: Dharma, artha, kama,
moksha sari padartha hate milaya tuhari Parijata kuno kotha*

Rukmini who is always in love with the Lord tries to explain the worth of *Bhakti* to Satyabhama. He is the supreme being in the whole universe and by praying for him we get everything - *dharma, artha, kama, moksha*. So, what is the value of *Parijata*? Getting her Lord always by her side makes Rukmini a *swadinbhartrika nayika*.

- *Khandita nayika* is represented in the following Satyabhama's dialogue from *Parijat harana naat*.

*..... Je tuhara priyatama Rukmini taheko samipo soloho,
hamato kuno proyojono thiko //*

Here, Satyabhama describes her pity state of being unfortunate and asked her lord to go to his most darling wife Rukmini after she felt of being neglected by her lord for the *parijat* flower as he pegged the *parijat* to her hair.

- *Abhisarika nayika* represents the Gopis in *Keligopala naat* who stealthily fled away from their homes to have some intimate time with Krishna.

He swami, tuhari gite mohito huiya pati suto sobo chori tuhari pada samipo paolo

The Gopis tells the lord that the song sung by him mesmerized them and they left their husbands and childrens behind, only to be with him.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

Madhavdeva's plays known as *Jhumuras* (like Chordhora, Pimpora gusua, Arjun bhanjan etc) profoundly manifest the *vatsalya rasa*.

The dialogue of *Sutradhar* from the play *Chordhara* exhibit the *Vatsalya bhava*:

..... *krishnaka kule koye, gole bandhi badan chumbana koye param Ananda pawolo/ Sri krishna maoko stanaprana koye, maoko badan nirekhi kandi kanti gopisoboko brittanta sunawolo / suni joshoda gowalisaboko gari diye jaisono bololo....*

This dialogue shows how mother Yashoda pampers her child Krishna with hugging and kissing.

A renowned scholar Sanjib Borkakoti penned, "Even when any such *rasa* was present in any of the Guru's *Ankiya plays*, that was only to further the case of *Bhakti*" (Borkatoki 2015, 66).

Hence the above discussion depicts the various *bhavas* and *rasas* but the pivotal, *bhakti bhava* pervades throughout the performance. As scholars stated that all *bhavas* are subservient to the *bhakti*. Therefore, all *bhavas* finally merge into *bhakti bhava* and all these different *bhavas* create varied *rasas* among the spectators.

The dance numbers or *Nritta* in sattriya dance repertoire are classified into two broad categories:

- Dances included in dramatic representations (*Sutradhari, Gopi nac, Gosai pravesar nac, Rasar nac, Jhumura, Behar nac*, etc)
- Dances outside the boundary of dramatic representations (*Nadubhangi, Chali, Rajaghorla Chali, Ojapali*, etc).

Besides this, the *dhemalis* of *Gayan Bayan* have their distinctive repertoire of presentations. It was Guru Roseswar Saikia Barbayan who first established the dance form on the stage outside the boundary of *Sattria* and tried to render the dance form fit for the modern stage with the guidance of Dr. Maheswar Neog.

The *ankiya bhaona* presentation generally begins with the *Gayan Bayan*, where musicians played upon khols(drums) and tal(cymbals). A solo presentation begins with a *vandana* or *sloka* in praise of lord Krishna or Rama where the dancer pays obeisance to the deity and audience. After which pure *nritta* like *Sutradhari* or *Chali, Jhumura, Gopi* of *ramdani* part and then *gitar nac* are taken up where *abhinaya* is enacted. Nowadays, the dancers select the *abhinaya* section from the vast literature of Sankaradeva and Madhavadeva's compositions.

Notwithstanding, themes for *abhinaya* from other literary texts like *Ramayana, Mahabharata*, and various other epics are always a welcome addition to the Sattriya repertoire. Thus, extending the boundary and opening up new thematic content for the dance form. *Brindavana Yatra* of Guru Bhabananda Barbayan, *Devakikheda Varnanam* of Guru Jatin Goswami, Anita

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

Sharma's *Ritu Rang*, *Chandalika* choreographed by Anita Sharma under the guidance of Guru Jatin Goswami produced by Sattriya Kendra in Guwahati are some of the innovative and experimentation works done in Sattriya field.

Abhinaya in Manipuri Dance

Artist: Amusana Devi

Manipuri dance generally covers and envelopes all the dance forms of Manipur and the most important being the *Rasalila* and the *Sankirtana*. Both these dance traditions are the outcome of *Vaishnavism*. *Nritta* and *Abhinaya* are distinctly evident in *Rasalila* tradition of Manipur. The *Sankirtana* is not only a musical form but dance form too with a devotional aspect to it. A new *pala* known as *Nata pala* was introduced by King Bhagyachandra. “The *Nata* is then the person, who acts and according to our old texts, he is supposed to be conversant with all the four kinds of *abhinayas* or acting. He is then acting in *natya* or theatre and his ultimate aim is to evoke *rasa*. Unlike most Indian dancing, he is not supported by any accompanist in singing. He sings efficiently. He aims to express the *sthayibhava* of Krishna-*rati* to evoke the *Bhakti rasa*” (Bandopadhyay 2010, 123). *Rasalila* occupies a special place in the 10th *Skandha* (chapter) of *Srimad Bhagavata*. It describes one Krishna with one gopi means Krishna dancing with all gopis at a time. The term *Rasakrida* and *Maharasa* is mentioned in *Srimad Bhagavatam*. Varied forms of *Rasalilas* are found in Manipur state. “There are five different forms of the *Rasa* dance that the Manipuri Vaishnavas perform by transforming the Radha-Krishna leela into *abhinaya*” (Devi 2010, 58). Eminent scholar, Kapila Vatsyayan wrote, “It is only when we come to the *rasa* dances of the region that the richness and dexterity of both *nritta*, pure dance and *abhinaya*, mime of the Manipuri style is evident” (Vatsyayan 2015, 75). The *Rasa* dance has close affinity to the tenets of *shastras*- based on devotion. Maharaj Bhagyachandra is said to be the pioneer of *Rasa* dance. He composed three *Rasalilas* out of five- *Maharasa*, *Kunjarasa*, *Vasantarasa*, *Nityarasa* and *Divarasa*. *Maharasa*, *Kunjarasa* and *Vasantarasa* were composed by Rajarshri Bhagyachandra and is performed in the *Rasa Mandapa*. *Maharasa* is performed at first in the *Govindajee* temple on *Kartika purnima*. Later it is observed in the village temples known as *Khullak mandapa*. *Kunjarasa* which was

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

composed by Bhagyachandra and performed in the month of *Asvin*, has not been as popular as *Maharasa* due to its confinement within the temple premises only. *Vasantarasa* is perfectly intertwined with dance and drama. It is performed on the full moon day of *Chaitra*. *Nityarasa* was introduced during the reign of king Chandrakirti and performed on any day of the year in the *khullak mandapa* of the villages. Next, come to the *Divarasa*, introduced by King Curachand and performed only during the daytime.

The sequence of performance of the *Rasalilas* are:

<i>Rasa Lila</i>	Time of Performance
<i>Maharasa</i>	Kartik Purnima
<i>Vasantarasa</i>	Chaitra Purnima
<i>Kunjarasa</i>	Full moon day of Asvin
<i>Nityarasa</i>	On any day of the year
<i>Divarasa</i>	During day time

The Chaitanite Vaishnavism has marked its own place in the Manipur state by influencing the traditions of Pre-Vaishnavism. "Among the Indian classical dances, the beautiful *Rasalila* dances of Manipur are an ideal combination of dance and drama. The Vaishnava *padas* or poems, the devotional stories based on the Puranic literature, the blending of the vocal and instrumental music, the colorful costumes all constitute to evoke the *Bhakti* or the devotion of the audience to witness Vrindavana in their minds" (Bandopadhyay 2010, 200). "The Ras is indeed a divine experience with the atmosphere surcharged with bhakti or devotion. The audience comes for paying obeisance to performance and not for mere entertainment" (R. S. Singh 2015, 45). The introduction of *Rasalila* at the *Govindajee* temple helped to proselytize the Chaitanya Vaishnavism in Manipur and started to conceptualize the *Radha* and *Krishna* theme in the Manipuri dance. "The world-famous *Rasalila* has developed form and content of *Laiharaba* by the Manipuri mind" (M. K. Singh 1988, 169).

Rajarshri Bhagyachandra used this medium of dance to propagate the Vaishnavite religion of Chaitanya's. To evaluate the *Pancharasas* of Chaitanite Vaishnavism on the *abhinaya* of Manipuri dance it is necessary to analyze the *Rasalilas*. "The styles of Ras as composed altogether in an art form is said to be Ras dance. In this dance Shringar Rasas, Madhur Rasas, Vir Rasas, Vibhatsya Rasas, Hasya Rasas and Prem Bhakti Rasas (vairagya) are found closely knitted" (H. I. Singh 2009, 35).

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

The *abhinaya* in Manipuri dance is distinctly manifested in the *Rasalila*. "Though as a classical dance the Manipuri Rasa carries its share of abhinaya, or expressional content, compared to what one encounters in other Indian dance styles this looks so tame and muffled and so removed from comprehension that one wonders if it is of any consequence at all" (Venkataraman 2005, 151). *Rasalila* dances are full of *Bhakti rasa*, it is the main *rasa* and other *rasas* are subservient to it. "The dance invokes pure thought in its spectators. It draws people towards a realm of bhakti. It is not influenced by any external distracting factors. It envelops the spectators with a spiritual vibe with its mellow and graceful movements. The spectators get so engrossed in the performance that they forget about themselves and their worries and get mental tranquility" (Devi 2010, 50).

The *Rasalilas* are the dances with *abhinaya* in the Manipuri repertoire. Different *rasas* and *bhavas* are showcased in different *Rasalilas*. For example, in *Maharasa*, the theme and sequence are based on the *Bhagavatam* (*Rasapanchadhyay*). The *Rasalilas* evoke various *rasas*.

Karuna rasa is apparent in the following verse of *Maharasa*:

*ha ha pranabandhu
gokulacandra kothaye
amra saba abhagini
chadi gela nilamani
ha ha pranabandhu
toma vina jinava anartha*

The above lines depict the lamentation of the *astasakhis* and search for Krishna after his disappearance from amongst them.

Hasya rasa is distinct in the following song of *Kunjarasa*:

*Sakhi he rai kanhu Bihari rasa
Prati tarulata tale rasera hillol phira
Gan-nrtya hasa parihase.*

Here the Gopis, Radha and Krishna sing and dance with their laughter and speech under every tree.

Raudra rasa: In *Vasantarasa*, Radha gets jealous seeing Krishna dancing with Chandrabali. Radha on being angry leaves the *rasa* palace. And Krishna gets worried as he couldn't find Radha.

*Sadharana prema dekhi sarvata samata
radhara kutila prema hoyila bamata
krodha kari rasa chadi gela manakari
tare na dekhiya iha byakula sri hari //*

Due to the advent of Chaitanite Vaishnavism the *pancharasas* plays a significant role in the Manipuri dance repertoire. Among the *Pancharasas*, (i.e *Shanta*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsalya*, *Madhura*) the *Madhura rasa* become prominent while other *rasas* become subservient to it.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

The *madhura bhava* is the significant *bhava* in the *Rasalilas* among the rest which plays an auxiliary role to flourish the *madhura rasa* in the spectator's mind. The *madhura rasa* is explicitly extant in the *Rasalilas*. Through the following verse and song, it clearly expresses the *madhura rasa*:

In *Nityarasa* –

*Nibrita nikunje milila bor kana
Daruna madana payala samadhana
Duhu adhramrita dhunu kara pana,
Canda cakora jana milala parana
Tanu tanu milala parane parana //*

Krishna and Radha met at a lonely place and kiss each other and enjoyed each other's company. They slowly became physically closer to each other and exchanged love.

“The Nitya Ras again describes the Abhisar, and the Millan or divine union of Radha and Krishna. This Ras ends on a devotional note, with Radha surrendering her soul to her lord” (Massey 2004, 195).

In *Kunjarasa* –

*Brajaraja ki nandana rasarasameha
Nacata manamohani
.Sange brisa bhanu dulari
Saptasura tani tani
Madhura rasa gayi
Sukhe vrindavana majhe //*

Here, Krishna the son of Braja attracts everybody by his dancing. Radha, daughter of brisabhanu sings in the seven notes happily in Vrindavana expounding the *madhura rasa*.

“The Kunj Ras is a delightful dance describing how Radha and Krishna set out to meet each other (the Radha and Krishna Abhisars), and later of their tryst in the ‘kunj’ or bower” (Massey 2004, 195).

In *Maharasa*

*Tatraikamsagatam vahum Krishnasyotpalasourabham
Candalaliptamaghraya hristaroma cucumba ha*

A gopi feels the hands of Krishna on her shoulders. She could smell the lotus fragrance from the sandalwood paste-covered hand. She kissed Krishna with romantic blissfulness.

From another stanza

Nrityanti gayati kacit kujannupuramekhela

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals*Parsvasthacyutahastabjam srantabit stanayoh sivam*

The sound of ankle bells and the clothes, mekhela could be heard while dancing. They sometimes tried to put Krishna hands on their breasts while singing and dancing gleefully with him.

Besides these *Rasalilas*, there are dance- dramas depicting the deeds of Krishna's childhood with his mother and with his companions. They do not take into account the love-plays aspect of Krishna and Gopis. These are *Gosthalila* and *Udukhalarsa*. *Gosthalila* enact the dramatic presentation of Krishna's various deeds into two distinct parts. "The first part has the background set at Nandalaya or the house of Krsna's father Nanda and the second part at the meadows while grazing cows with others cowherd boys" (Bandopadhyay 2010, 201). Balarama is a pivotal character in *Gosthalila*.

Killing *Dhenukasura* and *Bakasura* are presented in this *gosthalila* on the *Gosthastami*. The story is inspired by the tenth chapter of *Srimadbhagavata* and influenced of stories of Vrindavan as well. In *Udukhalarsa*, the stealing of buttermilk at the houses of gopis is represented. Both the *Gosthalila* and *Udukhalarsa* profoundly exhibit the *vatsalyarasa* (Parental love) in the repertoire of Manipuri dance.

Further, the abhinaya in Manipuri dance is adorned with the inclusion of Jayadeva's *Gitagovinda* and *Padavalis*. Moreover, the *Dasavatar* item of Manipuri dance holds a place of importance.

From the above discussion, it is proven that the stories of the *Rasalilas*, *Gosthalila*, *Udukhalarsa*, *Dasavatara* and the songs of *Gitagovinda* clearly manifested the *Shanta*, *Dasya*, *Sakhya*, *Vatsalya* and *Madhura rasa* of Chaitanite Vaishnavism in this chapter.

The *Nayikas* are also present in the *Rasalilas* of Manipur.

In *Nityarasa*, the *Vasakasajjika* and *Abhisarika* nayika are beautifully quoted in the following verse respectively.

*Abhisara lagi besa banayata
Sakhigana Ananda pai
Koi ciruni dhoru cikura chitra kori
Sindoora tilaka bonai
Dekhu, dekhu bhubana manohara rai*

After hearing the flute of Krishna, Radha gets ready to meet him. She was dressed up by her sakhis. One holds the mirror; another makes her hair and one puts the sindoor on her forehead. And with this, she enchants the universe.

*Gurujana parijana ghumaola jana
Samaya jani dhani karala payana //*

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

When her elders gone off to sleep, Radha quietly slipped away to meet her lord.

The following verse from *Vasanta rasa* depicts Radha as a *Khandita nayika*.

*Sadharana prema dekhi sarvata samata
Radhara kutila prem hoyila bamata
Krodha kori rasa chadi gela mana kari
Tare na dekhiya iha byakula Srihari //*

Radha gets jealous seeing Chandrabali dancing with Krishna. She leaves the *rasamandali* in enraged.

Further, *Sankirtana* is also an important inclusion in the Manipuri repertoire. It has two streams of performance; one belongs to the old school called *Ariba pala* and the new school called *Anouba pala*. The *Ariba pala* or *Bangadesh pala sankirtana* get fused in Manipur which was prevalent even before king Bhagyachandra. A new form of *Sankirtana* called *Nata pala* is introduced by King Bhagyachandra only to propagate the Chaitanite Vaishnavism. This new *Nata Sankirtana* is called *Anouba pala* which is an important ritual performance of the Manipuris. “In Manipur, songs are not merely sung but danced. Hence the Manipuri musician singing Kirtana is called Nata, a term in Sanskrit, meaning abhinayas and different types of Natya (drama) gets himself merged in the rasa (flavor) which he is trying to portray and who appears physically on the stage: a dancer with songs on the lips” (E. N. Singh 1997, 20).

“Sankeertan, thus, became a part of community worship and today some of the most highly evolved Manipuri dances, such as the brilliant Pung Cholom and the Kartal Cholom are associated with the Sankeertan” (Massey 2004, 198). The *Nata Sankirtana* is based on the *Vaishnavite* philosophy of *Bhakti*. “They were taught the doctrine of the efficacy of Hari nama as the best method of salvation by the preachers” (M. K. Singh 1988, 215-216).

Finally, we can culminate from the above discussion that *Bhakti rasa* is the main prominent *rasa* in the *abhinaya* aspect of both Manipuri and Sattriya dance. But *Madhura rasa*, the love play of Radha and Krishna is strongly rooted in Manipuri dance while it is absent in Sattriya dance.

Conclusion: Thus, this chapter unfolds the comparative study of Abhinaya between Sattriya and Manipuri dance as:

Sattriya Dance	Manipuri Dance	Observations
The <i>abhinaya</i> mainly revolves around the central figure Krishna.	The <i>abhinaya</i> theme revolves around Radha and Krishna.	<i>Abhinaya</i> on Radha or the story of Krishna with his companion Radha is not found in Sattriya dance like that in Manipuri dance.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

<i>Bhakti</i> is the pivotal <i>Rasa</i> and others are subservient to it.	The <i>Pancharasas</i> gained prominence in Manipuri dance. Out of which the <i>Madhura rasa</i> has been given a special place.	No <i>Madhura rasa</i> is observed in Sattriya dance.
<i>Naats</i> of Sankaradeva's and Madhavadeva's are used to propagate the Vaishnavite religion in Assam.	Rajarshri Bhagyachandra's <i>Rasalilas</i> are used to Propagate the Chaitanite Vaishnavism in Manipur.	Both Music and Dance are used as a medium to propagate the Vaishnavism in both the states.
Madhavadeva's <i>Jhumuras</i> solely represent the child krishna's deeds.	<i>Gosthalila</i> and <i>Udukhalara</i> depict the stories of child Krishna.	The similarity is observed as both these plays exhibit <i>Vatsalya</i> <i>rasa</i> principally.
Themes for abhinaya are taken from Borgits, <i>Ankiya naats</i> , <i>Jhumuras</i> and other epics.	<i>Gitagovinda</i> , <i>Rasalila</i> , <i>Padavali</i> are mainly performed in Manipuri dance.	The conjugal love themes of Radha and Krishna are absent in Sattriya dance.
<i>Gayan Bayan</i> (played on khol and taal) in Sattriya is totally based on <i>Bhakti</i> .	<i>Sankirtana</i> (played on pung and kartaal) is based on the philosophy of <i>Bhakti</i> .	The Performing style of both this presentation is almost similar and based on <i>Bhakti</i> .

Acknowledgment:

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Dr. Sruti Bandopadhyay, Professor, Department of Rabindra Sangeet Dance and Drama, Visva Bharati University along with Jatin Goswami, Sattriya exponent, Dr. Mallika Kandali, Sattriya exponent and Adhyapak Gobinda Saikia, Sattriya exponent for their valuable suggestions and constant guidance to prepare my manuscript.

References:

- Bandopadhyay, Sruti. 2010. *Manipuri Dance: An Assessment on History and Presentation*. New Delhi: Subhi Publications.
- Bora, Ghanakanta. 2013. *Sattriya classical dance of Assam*. Edited by Sunil Kothari. Vol. 64. 3 vols. Mumbai: Marg Foundation.

UGC-CARE enlisted & Indexed in the EBSCO International Database of Journals

- Borkatoki, Sanjib. 2015. *Srimanta Sankardeva: a multi-faceted genius*. Guwahati: Purbanchal Prakash.
- Bose, Mandakranta. 2007. *Movement and Mimesis, the idea of dance in sanskrit tradition*. New Delhi: D.K Printworld (P) Ltd.
- Devi, Jamini. 2010. *Cultural History Of Manipur*. New Delhi: Mittal Publications.
- Massey, Reginald. 2004. *India's Dances their History, Technique & Repertoire*. New Delhi: Abhinav Publications.
- Sarangadeva. 1976. *Sangitaratnakar*. Edited by Translated by Dr. K Kunjunni Raja and Radha Burma. Vol. IV. Madras: Adyar Library and Research Centre.
- Shastri, Nityananda. 1991. *Bharatar Natyashastra*. Edited by Mukunda Madhav Sarma. Vol. I. Assam: Asom Natya Sanmilan.
- Singh, E Nilakantha. 1997. *Manipuri Dances*. New Delhi: R. Kumar Omsons Publications.
- Singh, Haobam Ibochaoba. 2009. *The Pre World War II Form of Rasleela*. Imphal: Haobam Ongbi Shantibala Devi.
- Singh, M. Kirti. 1988. *Religion And Culture Of Manipur*. Delhi: Manas Publications.
- Singh, R.K Singhajit. 2015. *Manipuri*. Delhi: Wisdom Tree Publishers.
- Sri Sri Sankardeva, Sri Sri Madhavdeva. 2016. *Kirtanghosa Aru Naamghosa*. Assam: Jyoti Prakashan.
- Unni, N.P. 2014. *Natyashastra*. Vol. II. Delhi: NBBC Publishers & Distributors(P) Ltd.
- Vatsyayan, Kapila. 2015. *Indian Classical Dance*. New Delhi: Publications Division.
- Venkataraman, Leela. 2005. *Indian Classical Dance: Tradition in Transition*. New Delhi: Lustre Press Pvt Ltd.